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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000637

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [SOCI](#) [KTIP](#)  
SUBJECT: CHILD SOLDIERS PREVENTION ACT DEMARCHE POINTS

REF: A. A. 09 STATE 3559  
[1](#)B. B. 09 STATE 121328

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Following the request (Ref B) to inform our host government of the provisions of the Child Soldier Prevention Act (CSPA) and its impending implementation, Embassy Kabul delivered demarche points to the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD) to review the progress they are making on demobilization and reintegration activities. Based on these discussions and on further information from NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A), Embassy Kabul is persuaded of the soundness of ANA and ANP vetting and recruitment procedures and strongly recommends that Afghanistan not be placed on the CSPA sanctions list that accompanies the 2010 TIP report. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On February 1, Pol and Pol Miloffs meet with Major General Farahi, Director for Counter-Terrorism, MOI and Brigadier General Ghulam Jan, Director of Recruitment, MOI, in charge of recruiting for the ANP; and on February 16 with Brigadier General Ibrahim, Deputy Chief of Recruiting, MOD, in charge of recruiting for the ANA. As Post reported in Ref A, Embassy Kabul recognizes that GIROA does not recruit child combatants. The ANA and the ANP, working in concert with NTM-A actively vet recruits and reject underage applicants. (NOTE: Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) remains embedded in NTM-A. End note.) Both the MOI and the MOD value the USG's technical assistance in improving their recruitment and vetting procedures, and emphasized their commitment to ensuring that underage applicants are not permitted into the ANP or ANA.

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Strict Guidelines  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) MOI sits on two Inter-Ministerial Commissions devoted to Child Protection Issues. They hold monthly meetings, and send monthly monitoring reports to the President documenting recruitment activities; we were invited to attend these meetings. Since BG Ghulam Jan, s appointment four years ago as Director of Recruitment, he has implemented rigorous recruiting procedures. He praised the U.S. training course he attended, drawing on this training to draft solid recruitment procedures for the ANP. Recruits are assessed on the following items: age (18-34); citizenship; evidence of physical or mental disability; and evidence of drug addiction. Recruits receive a medical clearance and a criminal background check on themselves and their family members; and must provide two references, one of which should be from a community elder, who will verify their age, identity, and good citizenship. MOI's Administrative Department handles hiring for service workers; all service workers undergo the same procedures.

[1](#)4. (SBU) MOD follows similar procedures for military and service personnel with the same stringent guidelines, including separate interviews with the applicants and their

families to determine their motivation in joining the armed forces. Recruitment centers in all 34 provinces follow these procedures. The MOD underscored that it follows Presidential Decree 97 on recruitment, which set recruitment at ages 18-27. The MOD has responded to the recent pressure to increase troop size in the ANA by raising its upper age limit on new recruits to age 35. The ANA rejects on average one percent of recruits monthly who fail the age screening. Per Reftel A, Embassy Kabul remains confident that the ANA and its subsets, including the Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAAC), and the ANP and its subsets including the Afghan Border Police, Customs Police, Afghan Uniform Police (AUP), Afghan National Civil Order of Police (ANCOP), Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), Counter-Narcotics Unit, the Anti-Crime Unit, and the Afghan Police Protection Program (AP3) have robust recruiting and vetting practices in place against child soldiers.

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Insurgent Use of Children  
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¶16. (SBU) The MOI believes that insurgent recruitment of children remains a problem. They are especially concerned about children being recruited as suicide bombers. MOI's Counter-Terrorism Department and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) actively investigate cases of child insurgency. However, Embassy Kabul believes that sanctioning GIROA as a result of insurgent use of child soldiers is counterproductive, undermining progress on joint military initiatives.

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¶17. (SBU) Embassy Kabul reiterated to the ministries the concern that children may be employed or exploited for a variety of service personnel positions, including sex work, particularly at the provincial level. We received assurances that underage persons were neither recruited, hired, or retained if previously hired, in service positions.

¶18. (U) COMMENT: Embassy Kabul supports the progress GIROA has made on eliminating children from its ranks and from its support functions. GIROA has done so during a protracted war and under considerable international pressure to increase the size of its armed forces. Further, given the highly militarized nature of Afghan society, GIROA is showing demonstrable commitment to preventing children from joining its armed forces. We strongly urge that the Afghanistan is not placed on the CSPA 2010 sanctions list that accompanies the 2010 TIP report. End Comment.  
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